

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the final Office Action mailed February 25, 2003 (paper no. 5) (hereinafter "Final Action"). Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Final Action. Applicants respectfully request, however, that the Examiner take one final look at the rejected independent Claims 1, 7, and 11 in light of the amendments and remarks presented herein. Applicants have amended these independent claims to clarify that the bag is sealed by applying force to an outer surface of the bag so as to press the bag against the external form of the cassette or carrying device, which is not disclosed or suggested by the cited references.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of all pending claims is respectfully requested for at least the reasons discussed hereafter. Alternatively, Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment as introducing no new issues and narrowing the issues for further consideration.

Dependent Claim 2 Satisfies the Requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112

Dependent Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite because "wafers" is incorrectly spelled as "wavers." In response, Applicants have corrected the spelling error.

Independent Claims 1, 7, and 11 are Patentable over the Cited References

Independent Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 6,155,027 to Brooks (hereinafter "Brooks") in view of U. S. Patent No. 4,611,456 to Gillio-tos *et al.* (hereinafter "Gillio-tos"). Independent Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Brooks in view of Gillio-tos and further in view of U. S. Patent No. 4,928,474 to Schirmer (hereinafter "Schirmer"). Independent Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Brooks.

Independent Claims 1, 7, and 11 are directed to methods of packing semiconductor wafers in which a packing bag is used. In particular, a bag is used to enclose one or more

wafers and is manipulated as described, for example, in the following recitation from independent Claim 11:

molding the packing bag by **applying force to an outer surface of the packing bag, opposite the carrying device, so as to press the packing bag against at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device** such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device. (Emphasis added).

Claims 1 and 7 include similar recitations. This aspect of the present invention is discussed, for example, in the Specification at page 5, lines 3 - 19.

Turning now to the cited references, neither Brooks, nor Gillio-tos, nor Schirmer disclose or suggest applying force to an outer surface of a packing bag, opposite a carrying device, so as to press the packing bag against at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device. Instead, these references describe packing enclosures in which a vacuum is used to cause the packing enclosures to conform to the carrying devices or articles contained therein. The Final Action states that "vacuum packing includes a valve that is attached to the outer side of the bag, the vacuum contacts that outer side of the bag that is opposite the cassette to evacuate the air and thereby seal the bag." (Final Action, page 6). Although, for example, the Brooks reference may show contact being made with a valve on the outer surface of a bag to evacuate air therefrom, none of the cited references disclose or suggest applying force to the outer surface of the packing bag so as to press the packing bag against the device or article contained therein.

In rejecting Claim 6, the Final Action cites U. S. Patent No. 5,709,065 to Krause (hereinafter "Krause") as disclosing mechanically sealing a packing bag through heat sealing. (Final Action, page 5). Applicants acknowledge that Krause describes the use of heat sealing to seal a bag, but Applicants respectfully submit that Krause contains no disclosure or suggestion of applying force to an outer surface of a packing bag, opposite a carrying device, so as to press the packing bag against at least a portion of an external form of the carrying device such that a portion of the packing bag substantially conforms to the at least a portion of the external form of the carrying device.

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For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 7, and 11 are patentable over the cited references, either alone or in combination, and that dependent Claims 2 - 6, 8 - 10, and 12 - 20 are patentable at least as they depend from an allowable claim.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Alternatively, Applicants respectfully request entry of the present amendment as narrowing the issues for further consideration. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

It is not believed that an extension of time and/or additional fee(s)-including fees for net addition of claims-are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. In the event, however, that an extension of time is necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such an extension is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a). Any additional fees believed to be due in connection with this paper are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Box AF, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231 on April 14, 2003.


Traci A. Brown
Date of Signature: April 14, 2003